

45 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 14 August 1789

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 90-91

PRINTED: Rutt, I, ii, p. 28<sup>1</sup>

ADDRESS: The Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

POSTMARK: Birmingham

[Aug 14. 1789]

Dear friend

I rejoice in the account of your safe return to London, and that you and M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsey are so much better for your journey, and I reflect with particular pleasure on the benefit I derived from it, tho your stay with us was not so long as I could have wished.

We have now nearly printed one volume of the History.<sup>2</sup> It will be 520 or 530 pages, and I have just sketched a Dedication and Preface, of which I shall send you copies before they are struck off. They are neither of them long. I have also completely finished all but the last period. In reading Mr Gibbon,<sup>3</sup> I have found so extravagant and curious an exaggeration of the magnanimity of Athanasius's<sup>4</sup> conduct, that I think it will make a good article for the Gentleman's Magazine; and in Mr Russell's<sup>5</sup> packet for monday evening, I propose to send it you. It will surprise you much. He really writes more from his imagination than from authorities. I have seriously animadverted on his account of the conversion of Constantine.

I have nearly completed the arrangement of the new edition of my philosophical works,<sup>6</sup> and a friend of Mr Keir,<sup>7</sup> will mention the affair of the Dedication to Mr Fox.<sup>8</sup> There is time enough for it. I am sorry tho that you did not see Mr Lee<sup>9</sup> on the subject.

Mr John Finch<sup>10</sup> still persists in keeping the house, notwithstanding a very serious remonstrance from an indifferent person of the best character in Dudley. Mr W<sup>m</sup> Finch<sup>11</sup> leaves him to himself; but seems desirous that I would write to him. If I do I shall send you a copy of the letter. Perhaps Mr Shore<sup>12</sup> would have the most influence with him.

I thank //you// for your various articles of news collected on your journey, and hope you will soon find some thing worth sending from London. We have not yet heard that W<sup>m</sup><sup>13</sup> has left Paris. When we heard last, he was very well, and much interested in the great s[ce]ne before him.

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<sup>1</sup> Rutt's edition omits the second and the fourth paragraphs, as well as the sentences on William Priestley in Paris and Mr Jones.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley, *A General History of the Christian Church, to the Fall of the Western Empire*, 2 vols. (Birmingham, 1790), vol. i.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), see 3 Apr 1789.

<sup>4</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296-373), Bishop of Alexandria [ODCC].

<sup>5</sup> William Russell (1740-1818), see 5 Jul 1786.

<sup>6</sup> Priestley, *Experiments and Observations on Different Kinds of Air, and other Branches of Natural Philosophy, Connected with the Subject*, 3 vols. (Birmingham, 1790).

<sup>7</sup> James Keir (1735-1820), chemist and industrialist [ODNB].

<sup>8</sup> The work was dedicated to George, Prince of Wales.

<sup>9</sup> John Lee (1733-1793), see Mar 1770.

<sup>10</sup> John Finch, cousin of William Finch.

<sup>11</sup> William Finch, see 11 Jun 1787.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Shore (1738-1828), see 26 Aug 1787.

<sup>13</sup> William Priestley (b. 1771), 22 Jul 1789.

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I admire Mr Jones;<sup>14</sup> and expect no great things fr[om] Stanhope.<sup>15</sup>

I am glad that Mr Turner<sup>16</sup> will assist in our translation. I have not seen Mr Belsham,<sup>17</sup> but hope he will assist me in my department; but when I have rid ~~of~~ my hands of what is now upon them, I shall stick close to it.

My wife continues much better, and desires her best remembrances, with mine, to you both,

yours most affectionately

J Priestley.

Birm. Aug. 14. 1789.

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<sup>14</sup> ? Richard Jones (1727/8-1800), dissenting minister at Peckham, Surrey, author of *A Sermon preached at Peckham, in Surrey, on Sunday, November 2d, 1788. In Contemplation of the then Approaching Anniversary of the Glorious Revolution by King William; and the Preservation of English Liberty by that Great and Happy Event* (London, 1788).

<sup>15</sup> ? Charles Stanhope, third Earl Stanhope (1753-1816), politician [ODNB].

<sup>16</sup> ? William Turner (1714-1794), see Mar 1770.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.